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News Releases and other News Material

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For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-A, U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-4026.

Statement-

Release No. 0882.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

by Secretary Mike Espy in Response to the Decision of the Appellate Court Not to Lift the Stay on Safe Handling Labels Pending Appeal

WASHINGTON, Oct. 20 -- "Obviously, I'm disappointed that the stay was not lifted so we could move forward with safe handling labels while this issue is ultimately decided by the courts. We must now consider the possibility of an appeal, or administrative action -- or any other action which will assure that this safe handling label begins to appear on meat and poultry products as soon as possible. The bottom line is that we will have safe handling labels on meat and poultry products.

"Again, I would like to applaud those grocery outlets which have gone forward with the label on their own initiative. It is obvious they recognize the importance of this label to consumers and to ensuring consumer confidence. I encourage others to do the same."

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News Releases-

Release No. 0875.93
Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998
Jerry Redding (202) 720-3310

USDA SETS DATE FOR SOYBEAN PRODUCER REFERENDUM

WASHINGTON, Oct. 18 -- Soybean producers will vote Feb. 9, 1994 on whether the Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Program should continue, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today.

Kenneth C. Clayton, acting administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said, "Producers who certify that they produced soybeans between Sept. 1, 1991, and Dec. 1, 1993, will be eligible to vote in the referendum."

Registration and voting will both be held Feb. 9, 1994, and will take place at Cooperative Extension Service (CES) county offices. Absentee ballots will be available from Dec. 1 through Jan. 21 and must be returned in time to reach the appropriate county CES office by Feb. 2. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service personnel will count ballots, determine eligibility of voters, and tabulate results. For the program to continue, a simple majority of those voting must favor it.

In the referendum, producers will decide if they want to continue to pay the current assessment of 0.5 of one percent of the net market price of the soybeans they sell. The assessments are used to fund the program. The referendum is authorized by the Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act.

The referendum procedures will be published in a future issue of the Federal Register.

For more information contact Ralph L. Tapp, Chief, Marketing Programs Branch, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2624-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456: telephone 202-720-1115.

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Release No. 0876.93
Billy Cox (202) 720-3329
Wayne Baggett (202) 720-2065

USDA ANNOUNCES 1993/94 EXPORT ENHANCEMENT PACKAGE FOR BARLEY

WASHINGTON, Oct. 18--The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced a multi-country package of initiatives under the Export Enhancement Program to boost sales of 3,375,000 metric tons of U.S. barley.

The new package of barley initiatives includes 14 countries or regions and adds malting barley initiatives for China, Czech and Slovak Republics, Romania and Slovenia. The new initiatives will remain in effect through Sept. 30, 1994. Additional destinations or quantities may be added later.

The package of initiatives announced today, in metric tons, includes:

Country or Region	Metric Tons
Barley	
Algeria	300,000
Cyprus	150,000
Czech and Slovak Republics	25,000
Former Soviet Union (12)	150,000
Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan	
Israel	600,000
Jordan	400,000
Malta	25,000
Morocco	200,000
Poland	100,000
Romania	150,000
Saudi Arabia	900,000
Slovenia	50,000
Sub-total	3,050,000
Malting Barley	
China	100,000
Colombia	50,000
Czech and Slovak Republics	75,000
Romania	50,000
Slovenia	50,000
Sub-total	325,000
TOTAL	3,375,000

Sales of barley will be made to buyers in all countries announced today through normal commercial channels at competitive world prices. The export sales will be facilitated with cash bonus payments. The subsidy will enable U.S. exporters to compete at commercial prices in these markets.

EEP invitations for each of the countries will be issued in the near future. For more information, call Richard J. Chavez, (202) 720-5540, or L.T. McElvain, (202) 720-6211.

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Release No. 0877.93
Billy Cox (202) 720-3229
Wayne Baggett (202) 720-2065

USDA ANNOUNCES PUBLIC LAW 480 COMMODITY AVAILABILITY FOR FY 1994

WASHINGTON, October 18--The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced the types of agricultural commodities the United States will make available for allocation under Public Law 480 Food for Peace program in fiscal 1994.

The commodities eligible are: wheat and wheat products, rice and rice products, feed grains and feed grain products, dry edible beans, dry edible peas, lentils and soybean meal.

Also, edible vegetable oils (soybean oil, cottonseed oil and sunflowerseed oil), soyfood products, soybeans, peanuts, potatoes and potato products, pork, poultry meat (leg quarters), Atlantic mackerel, Atlantic dogfish, edible and inedible tallow and lard, cotton and solid wood products will be eligible.

Under the program, U.S. agricultural commodities are donated or sold on long-term low interest credit terms to foreign governments to meet humanitarian needs, assist in economic development and promote the development of foreign U.S. agricultural markets.

Commodities made available under the program are selected using criteria established by law. These criteria include U.S. productive capacity for the designated commodity, domestic requirements, farm and consumer price levels, commercial exports, carry-over stocks and urgent needs for humanitarian assistance in other countries. Adequate quantities of all commodities determined available are anticipated.

Initial funding allocations for recipient nations under Title I of Public Law 480 were announced on Sept. 21, 1993.

Additional information is available from Mary Chambliss, USDA, Foreign Agricultural Service, at (202) 720-3573.

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Release No. 0878.93
Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898
Jerry Redding (202) 720-4026

USDA HOLDS PUBLIC HEARING ON SALMONELLA ENTERITIDIS CONTROL PROGRAM PROPOSAL

WASHINGTON, Oct. 18 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service will host a public hearing Thursday, Oct. 21, on proposed changes to the Salmonella enteritidis (SE) regulations.

The hearing will be held from 1:30 p.m. until 3:30 p.m., in the Regency C room, Hyatt Regency, 1209 L Street, Sacramento, Calif. The Hyatt Regency can be reached at (916) 443-1234.

USDA's proposal to revise its regulations to improve the SE control program's effectiveness in reducing the risks of outbreaks of human salmonellosis was published in the Aug. 2 Federal Register. The comment period on the proposed rule ends Nov. 15.

APHIS' SE control program investigates all egg-related outbreaks of human salmonellosis reported by state departments of public health and the Centers for Disease Control. Officials locate infected chicken flocks then divert eggs from these flocks to pasteurization plants.

All interested parties or their attorneys and other representatives may attend and read a written statement. Persons wishing to speak at the hearing will be asked to provide their names and organizations for the record. All speakers should give two copies of their written statements to the APHIS representative presiding at the hearing. The presiding officer may have to limit the time for each presentation to allow every person wishing to speak the opportunity to do so.

For more information or a copy of the proposed rule, contact John Mason, Director, Salmonella enteritidis control program, USDA-APHIS, at (301) 436-4363.

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Release No. 0879.93
Brian Haaser (202) 720-6701
Dave Dickson (415) 744-2887

CALIFORNIA FOOD STAMP TRAFFICKER SENTENCED TO PRISON

Washington, Oct. 19 -- U.S. Department of Agriculture officials today said a convicted food stamp trafficker in Los Angeles has been sentenced to prison.

Charles Gillum, USDA's Acting Inspector General, said Thurman Branch, 58, was sentenced yesterday to 15 months in prison, three years probation and ordered to pay restitution of $112,389 following his guilty plea to a felony charge of the illegal acquisition and possession of food stamps.

Branch was arrested by USDA agents March 16, immediately following his sale of $29,400 in food stamps to an undercover agent for $25,000 in cash. USDA agents had observed runners on two occasions purchasing food stamps from recipients outside a food stamp distribution center in Los Angeles and then entering Branch's vehicle. Following the arrest of Branch, a search of his residence revealed an additional $82,000 in food stamps, which were seized. Branch had no legitimate reason to have any food stamps.

Gillum said the guilty plea and sentence are the result of an ongoing OIG investigation into "street trafficking" in the metropolitan Los Angeles area. Gillum said the total of $112,389 seized from Branch was one of the largest such seizures from a street trafficker.

"Efforts to investigate and obtain prosecutions of food stamp traffickers will continue to be a priority with this office to insure that tax dollars spent on this important nutrition program reach their intended recipients," Gillum said.

Gillum said Assistant United States Attorney Duane Lyons, Central District of California, Los Angeles, directed the prosecution.

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Release No. 0881.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623
Doug Martinez (202) 720-5966

USDA REPORT: NAFTA WILL MEAN MORE JOBS FOR U.S. AG SECTOR

WASHINGTON, Oct. 19--The increase in U.S. agricultural exports to Mexico from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) should create an additional 56,000 jobs, says Keith Collins, USDA'S Acting Assistant Secretary for Economics.

"U.S. agricultural exports to Mexico are expected to reach $10.1 billion by 2008 when NAFTA is fully implemented," says Collins. "This compares to an estimate of $7.5 billion without NAFTA."

Based on a recently completed update of USDA's March 1993 report, "Effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement on U.S. Agricultural Commodities," NAFTA would result in an increase of $2.6 billion in U.S. agricultural exports to Mexico and generate 56,000 new jobs.

The largest commodity increase under NAFTA is pegged for cattle, at $880 million of additional exports, followed by pork, $440 million; corn, $280 million; soybeans, $220 million; beef and dairy products, both $140 million; fruits, $125 million; poultry, $50 million; and vegetables and wheat, both projected at $40 million. Other commodities are expected to register addi-tional exports of $275 million.

"The United States exported $3.8 billion of agricultural products to Mexico in 1992," says Collins. "This was 40 percent above the level in 1990 when NAFTA negotiations were announced. Agricultural exports at the 1992 level accounted for 111,000 jobs."

Collins notes that USDA analysts have determined what the change in trade value for U.S. exports to Mexico, for selected farm commodities, will be in 2008 with the agreement, compared to the absence of an agreement. He says the year 2008 was chosen to reflect the maximum transition period for full implementation of the agreement's provisions for agriculture.

The estimates of jobs generated by greater farm exports under NAFTA are derived from a large input-output model of the U.S. economy. This model, maintained by the Department's Economic Research Service, associates labor requirements with agricultural commodity production and use. As farm exports rise, the model estimates the increase in farm production and the related increase in jobs on farms and in other industries that are affected by the higher farm production. Because labor becomes more productive over time, less labor will be needed in the future to export a given volume of farm product. These estimates of jobs created after full NAFTA implementation, are adjusted for the expected increase in U.S. labor productivity during the NAFTA phase-in period.

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Release No. 0888.93
Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898
Jerry Redding (202) 720-3310

USDA PROTECTS HEALTH OF LARGEST EQUESTRIAN AIRLIFT INTO U.S.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22 -- The largest international airlift of horses and carriages ever brought into the United States for a competition has returned home without leaving behind a single pest.

U.S. Department of Agriculture veterinarians worked for more than a year before the arrival of the 119 horses from more than 18 different countries at John F. Kennedy International airport to ensure that no pests or diseases came along for the ride.

"We also had to ensure that these horses could return safely to their countries from the competition after being in contact with horses from so many other countries," said Billy G. Johnson, deputy administrator of veterinary services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The horses came to compete in the World Pair Driving Championship which was held Oct. 7-10 at the U.S. Equestrian Team headquarters in Gladstone, N.J.

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service officials requested that horses be tested in their home countries to minimize possible problems during quarantine. The horses then were transported in groups of 10 to quarantine facilities after being unloaded from aircraft at JFK.

Horses from Europe met a three-day quarantine requirement at special facilities at the Gladstone headquarters where APHIS veterinarians examined them for external parasites and general health conditions. Horses from South America were trucked to the USDA Animal Import Center in Newburgh, N.Y., where they met a 7-day quarantine requirement for Venezuelan equine encephalo-myelitis. Horses from countries of similiar health status were housed together to minimize the risk of disease spread during the event. All horses tested negative for several diseases exotic to the U.S. after arrival and also cleared all health requirements to return home after the competition.

The United States hosted the World Pair Driving Championship for the first time. It is an annual event designed to test the versatility of the horse and the driver in dressage, marathon and obstacle course competitions. More horses traveled internationally by air for this competition than for the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Spain. The total value of horses and carriages shipped to this country for the event topped $1 million.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Photograph courtesy of Robert Klein, Lufthansa Airlines, contact Jim Freeman at (212) 745-0876.

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Program Announcements-

Release No. 0880.93
Gene Rosera (202) 720-6734
Charles Hobbs (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES, MARKETING CERTIFICATE RATES

WASHINGTON, Oct. 19--Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Dallas R. Smith today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

--long grain whole kernels:	8.05 cents per pound
--medium grain whole kernels:	7.32 cents per pound
--short grain whole kernels:	7.25 cents per pound
--broken kernels:	4.02 cents per pound

Based upon these milled rice world market prices, loan deficiency payment (LDP) rates, gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price, and marketing certificate rates are:

	Loan Gain and LDP Rate	Marketing Certificate Rate
	.............$/Cwt................	
--for long grain:	$1.68	$0.00
--for medium grain:	$1.52	$0.00
--for short grain:	$1.50	$0.00

These announced prices and rates are effective today at 3 p.m. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made Oct. 26 at 3 p.m. EDT.

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Release No. 0884.93
Robert Feist (202) 720-6789

USDA RELEASES SWEETENER MARKET DATA REPORT FOR AUGUST 1993

WASHINGTON, Oct. 21 --The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today released its Sweetener Market Data report for August 1993.

Report totals, in short tons (2,000 pounds), include:

-- Aug. 1, 1993 beginning sugar stocks - 2,397,406.
-- U.S. beet sugar production for August 1993 - 113,986.
-- U.S. cane sugar production for August 1993 - 91,878.
-- Deliveries for August 1993 - 836,329, including deliveries for domestic human consumption - 813,459.
-- Aug. 31, 1993 ending sugar stocks - 1,828,809.

Copies of the Sweetener Market Data report for August 1993 data are available from the Sweeteners Analysis Division, ASCS/USDA, Room 3727-S, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013; telephone (202) 720-3391; FAX (202) 720-8261.

♦♦♦♦♦

Release No. 0885.93
Janise Zygmont (202) 720-6734
Carol Childers (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PAYMENT RATE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, Oct. 21--Floy Payton, acting executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price or AWP), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (leaf grade 4, micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality), and the coarse count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 28. The user marketing certificate payment rate announced today is in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Oct. 22, through midnight Thursday, Oct. 28.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the Northern Europe (NE) price. The maximum allowable adjustment is the difference between the USNE price and the NE price.

A further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP may be made in accordance with this provision. The calculated AWP is 78 percent of the 1993 upland cotton base quality loan rate, and the USNE price exceeds the NE price by 2.09 cents per pound. Following are the relevant calculations:

I.	Calculated AWP	40.88 cents per pound
	1993 Base Loan Rate	52.35 cents per pound
	AWP as a Percent of Loan Rate	78
II.	USNE Price	56.60 cents per pound
	NE Price	- 54.51 cents per pound
	Maximum Adjustment Allowed	2.09 cents per pound

Based on a consideration of the U.S. share of world exports, the current level of cotton export sales and cotton export shipments, and other relevant data, no further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP will be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price		
NE Price		54.51
Adjustments:		
Avg. U.S. spot market location	11.82	
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	1.50	
Avg. U.S. location	0.31	
Sum of Adjustments		- 13.63
Calculated AWP		40.88
Further AWP adjustment		- 0
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE		40.88 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment	
NE Price	54.51
NE Coarse Count Price	- 50.69
	3.82
Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton	- 3.20
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0.62 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is below the 1991, 1992, and 1993 base quality loan rates of 50.77, 52.35, and 52.35 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the AWP, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is below the 1993-crop loan rate, cash loan deficiency payments (LDPs) will be paid to eligible producers who agree to forgo obtaining a price support loan with respect to the 1993 crop. The payment rate is equal to the difference between the loan rate and the AWP. Producers are allowed to obtain an LDP on a bale-by-bale basis.

The USNE price has exceeded the NE price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks and the AWP has not exceeded 130 percent of the 1993 crop year base quality loan rate in any week of the 4-week period. As a result, the user marketing certificate payment rate is 0.84 cents per pound. This rate is applicable during the Friday through Thursday period for bales opened by domestic users and for cotton contracts entered into by exporters for delivery prior to Sept. 30, 1994. Relevant data are summarized below:

Week	For the Friday through Thursday Period Ending	USNE Price	NE Price	User Marketing Certificate Payment Rate
		.....	cents/lb	.....
1	Sept. 30, 1993	58.05	55.31	1.49
2	Oct. 7, 1993	57.05	55.21	0.59
3	Oct. 14, 1993	58.20	55.12	1.83
4	Oct. 21, 1993	56.60	54.51	0.84

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rate will be announced on Thursday, Oct. 28.

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Release No. 0886.93
Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206
Wayne Baggett (202) 720-2065

USDA REMINDS PRODUCERS OF MULTIPLE-PERIL CROP INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22 -- Producers with 1993 crop losses greater than 65 percent of expected production must purchase multiple-peril crop insurance for the 1994 crop to be eligible for 1993 disaster assistance benefits.

USDA's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation has extended the sales closing date to Oct. 31 for regular and group risk plan insurance for wheat, oats, rye and barley.

There are no crop insurance requirements for fresh market sweet corn, fresh market tomatoes (for south Florida only), forage seeding, peppers, citrus, citrus trees and sugar beets (for Imperial County, California, only). The sales closing dates for these commodities occurred before the 1993 Disaster Assistance Program was announced and insurance was not available. All other crops have sales closing dates which occur during or after the signup period closes.

If multiple-peril crop insurance is available at any time during the signup period, producers with 1993 crop losses greater than 65 percent of expected production are required to purchase it to be eligible for disaster benefits. This requirement cannot be avoided by delaying the filing of a request for disaster benefits. However, this insurance can be canceled if it is later determined that it is not required. It is not required if 1993 losses were below 65 percent of the expected production.

Producers should contact their local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office for further information.

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Media Advisories-

Release No. 0883.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623
Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623
Neal Flieger (703) 305-2903

ESPY TO RELEASE REPORT CARD ON NUTRITION IN SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON, Oct. 21 -- A U.S. Department of Agriculture report, which scrutinizes the nutritional content in the nation's school meal programs, will be released 12:30 p.m., Monday, Oct. 25, by Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy at a D.C. elementary school.

The release of the report and news conference will take place at Brent Elementary School, 3rd and D Streets, S.E.

Espy and Ellen Haas, assistant secretary for Food and Consumer Services, will eat lunch with students from 12:30 p.m. to about 12:50. The news conference is expected to begin immediately after lunch in the cafeteria.

Copies of the report focusing on the school meal and breakfast programs, which reach 25 million children across the country, will be made available.

Parking for the media will be available with permits obtained from the principal's office on arrival. Set-up may begin after 10:30 a.m. in the cafeteria. Lighting and audio mult will be provided.

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Release No. 0887.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

USDA ESTABLISHES MIDWEST FLOOD "800" NUMBER RESPONSE CENTER

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22--The U.S. Department of Agriculture has established an "800" number flood response center for agricultural producers impacted by floods in the Midwest.

Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy, who was named coordinator of long-term flood recovery efforts by President Clinton, said he wants to be sure that all available information about assistance programs gets to those who need it in the fastest, most efficient way possible.

Starting Monday, Oct. 25, people in nine Midwest states can call 1-800-880-4183 to find out what flood-related agricultural assistance is available and where they can get it. U.S. Department of Agriculture program specialists will staff the number from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. CT weekdays (except holidays). They will answer questions or refer callers to other sources of information. At other times, questions may be left on an answering machine and someone from the response center will call back.

The nine states are Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

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